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Introduction

This book which we place in the hands of the reader, titled *European Ideas on Tolerance*, is the result of a seminar held at the Jagiellonian University from 6-8 March 2006 in cooperation with the JU Institute of European Studies and the Institute of German Studies at the University of Munich. Nearly three years have passed since. The discussion between the participants which has come about in the meantime has spurred us to publish the presentations then given. The greatest intellectual tension was brought about not by the controversies surrounding the shared history and matters affecting the union of the resettled, but rather that we still know too little about one another. The subject of tolerance also led us to attempt to reach a deeper understanding of this often-used but imprecise concept. We also could not overlook our common Anglo-Saxon literature nor shared classical culture.

European Ideas on Tolerance is composed of two parts. The first, carrying the title *Historical Perspectives in History, Philosophy and Literature* encompasses the rise and evolution of the idea of 'tolerance', beginning from its ancient Greek and Roman meaning, through the Middle Ages, finishing in the Romantic period. The second – *Contemporary Perspectives* – takes a modern-day approach to the topic.

The thrust of the first part is, above all, the presentation of tolerance in the contexts given by the title. Maximilian Benz's article, *Die Anfänge eines "alter populus" und das Ende der römischen Toleranz. Die Bacchanalien-Prozesse 186 v. Chr* ("Początki «alter populus» i koniec rzymskiej tolerancji. Bachanalia – procesy z 186 roku przed Chrystusem") is a treatment of the shaping of tolerance in the Roman Empire. The author presents the problem of crossing the borders of tolerance in the Empire with regards to the cult of Dionysus and events from 186 B.C. The concept of tolerance from antiquity was not built on interpersonal relationships, but rather concerned suffering and fate. The culture of the time did not deliberate the question of the necessity and borders of patience. However, we find incidents of both tolerance and intolerance. The author refers to a particular incident from 186 B.C., recorded by Titus Livius in *Ab urbe condita libri*, in whose context the crossing of the borders of tolerance in ancient Rome is visible. The discussion turns to a particular question of custom which became a problem for Rome, when the cult of Dionysus became widespread in the Eternal City.

It is necessary to underline the important differences in the understandings of tolerance separating the Roman Empire from the Middle Ages. The statement that the Middle Ages is marked by a lack of tolerance is injurious, as while the particulars of this era were not conducive to the modern understanding of the concept it cannot be said that there was no discussion of tolerance, neither that the concept was not a part of daily life. Tolerance is interpreted as, in one way, tolerance of sins – this concept is present in literature from the period. It has a connection with the Christian idea of 'caritas', the basis of the attitude of patience. Here the discussion revolves around St. Augustine and the words of St. Paul: „Caritas omnia tolerat”, which is related to the tolerance of others' sins. The key to understanding tolerance is Nicholas of Kuza's conviction that absolute truth is inaccessible to man. Tolerance in the Middle Ages has not only a theoretical dimension, but also a practical one. Astrid Dröse, author of the second article, titled *Lichtblicke in einer "finsternen Zeit" – Aspekte des Toleranzdenkens*

im Mittelalter ("Spojrzenie «w ciemny czas» – aspekty myślenia o tolerancji w okresie średniowiecza"), presents examples of tolerance, supported by literature and historical events from the period.

A breakthrough in the understanding of tolerance is the Renaissance, which gave rise to questions about man resulting from the movement then known as humanism. This is discussed in the next work *Tolerance versus humanism – Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski* ("Tolerancja a humanizm – Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski"), authored by Marcin Rebes. The article's purpose is to demonstrate tolerance as understood in the Renaissance using the example of one of the leading publicists of the era. This outstanding representative of the Renaissance attempted to bring far-reaching reforms to the Polish Republic, based on four principles: equality before the law, access to education, harmonizing of laws for the nobility and city dwellers and the idea of religious tolerance in the Christian world. Tolerance, as understood here, is fundamentally aimed at dialog (the calling of a synod) between Catholics and Protestants. Modrzewski makes mention of equal treatment of all social groups in Poland, desiring also to make education available to children from poorer families, and above all make use of the law as a supreme instrument of community life. Guided by the law, he sets out a strand of thinking which will be continued in Poland during the Enlightenment when the Constitution of 3 May 1791 – the second fundamental Act in the world after the American Constitution – is enacted.

Franziska Felber, in *Toleranz und Menschlichkeit in Gotthold Ephraim Lessings Nathan der Weise. Versuch einer Neubewertung der Figur des Klosterbruders* ("Tolerancja i człowieczeństwo w dramacie Gottholda Ephraima Lessinga *Mędrzec Natan*. Próba nowego wartościowania postaci brata zakonnego"), considers the idea of tolerance in relation to the drama *Nathan the Sage*, in which the author makes reference to three revealed religions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. The approach to life of the main character was not in the least characterized by indifference, but was understood through the prism of experience in which religions and their adherents define

their existence. The relation to religion has a secondary meaning with regards to humanity. In the drama they come together not so much as believers but as adherents recognizing defined rules of faith. The proceedings are not related as much to individuals as to each person's input into the general understanding of the idea under discussion. In his work, similarly to Modrzewski two centuries previous, the discussion is about tolerance in relation to religious tolerance, whereas the range of religion is even more developed. They are connected by the necessity of education in respect for differences.

The first part of the publication presented focuses on the problem of tolerance along with the hugely different understandings of the idea in antiquity, the Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern era. This tolerance appears to have its foundations in religion. Its contemporary meaning in a certain sense falsifies the real visage of tolerance. It is certain that religious tolerance results from experiencing intolerance, but in the Middle Ages it also possesses a positive aspect.

The second section of the work is dedicated to contemporary problems of tolerance, to a large degree separated from the questions discussed in the first four articles in the book, which undoubtedly does not remain without connections to the experiences of totalitarianism in the 20th century. It opens with Daniela Barchańska-Borek's *The Idea of Tolerance in the Political Thought of Alcide de Gasperi*, ("Idea tolerancji w politycznej myśli Alcide de Gaspariego") which treats the problem of tolerance as it relates to the idea of an integrated Europe after World War II as given by the Italian Prime Minister (1945-1953) Alcide de Gasperi. De Gasperi's attitude to fascism resulted on the one hand from experiencing its authoritarian nature, and on the other from the superior character of the individual in opposition to the nation as a whole. As a Christian democrat he not only supported the idea of a European federation, but was its initiator. His views are inspired by a personal philosophy which he defines as the worth of the individual. Alcide de Gasperi opens the perspective of dialog between people of varied political and religious thought; tolerance thus takes on the dimension of openness to the

individual through the prism of one's worth as a person, on which the concept of European unity is then constructed.

Insofar as the historical, philosophical and literary context of the first part concerns in a certain sense tolerance as related to religion. In the 20th century it enters the domain of society and the individual – as an entity formed by that society. Relates to individualism and respect for the individual as a human. Religious tolerance develops in the direction of tolerance grounded in ethics, and in this context moves towards dialog and openness towards that which is different.

Maria Mikos discusses the concept of tolerance in the context of an interview given by Leszek Kołakowski in the book *Mini-wykłady o maxi-sprawach*. In the 20th century this philosopher became a gigantic philosophical and political authority for younger and older generations. The article titled *Leszek Kołakowski über Toleranz* ("Leszek Kołakowski o Tolerancji") treats tolerance as viewed through Kołakowski's philosophy. The author outlines the concept of tolerance in three different spheres: first, Kołakowski's relations with other people; second, an interpretation of tolerance based on Kołakowski's personal experience; third, tolerance seen from the perspective of his publications concerning the subject. Kołakowski is a figure who, initially deeply fascinated with Marxism, with time becomes its staunch opponent. Later author's works treat philosophy and politics from an entirely different perspective, namely from that of the philosophical tradition and modern social reception.

Alongside Kołakowski, the creativity and work of the chaplain of Solidarity during the movement's formative period are worthy of review. This problem is addressed by Marcin Rebes in *Tolerance in the Context of Hope: On the Philosophy of Józef Tischner (1931-2000)* ("Tolerancja w kontekście nadziei. Rzecz o filozofii Józefa Tischnera (1931-2000)"), discussing the concept of philosophy as related to the creativity and direct influence of Józef Tischner on social changes. The thinking of the author of *Filozofia dramatu* is built on freedom and emancipation. For him, tolerance is "the gesture of placing hope" in the second person. Tischner states that finding one's own identity

is only possible by establishing transcendental relations with a close one. Abandoning the self, one finds oneself in that which is completely opposite. The author of *The Ethics of Solidarity* focuses attention on this issue in the context of dialog, as well as of work. This last concept is also a form of social dialog. Tischner strove for understanding and the casting aside of prejudice, as well as fighting with the unnecessary suffering of people. As the chaplain of Solidarity he contributed to a large degree to the defeat of totalitarianism through dialog. Hegel's literature could also, to some degree, lead to the dialectic on which Marxism was supported. Tischner fashioned a weapon against this which did not kill, but rather appealed to the conscience. He postulated a change of approach: from the dialectic of "one against the other" to "one for the Other". The difference between the French revolution and Polish social revolution is named with two concepts: "brotherhood" and "solidarity". The second term encompasses unlimited trust and mutual reliance without confrontation. Tolerance has not only a theoretical dimension but also the particular experience of suffering. Solidarity fashioned an expression of tolerance from home.

Guido Naschert, in *Abälard, Llull und Cusanus. Mittelalterliche Religionsgespräche und die Schwierigkeit heutiger Toleranzbegründung* ("Abelard, Llull i Mikołaj z Kozy. Średniowieczne rozmowy o religii oraz problem dzisiejszej podstawy tolerancji") attempts to present the question of tolerance relating on the current interest in the medieval religious dialogues. Why seem these dialogues so very promising? He tries to discuss this interest in comparing and confronting the structural problems of these dialogues with contemporary problems of liberal justification of tolerance. The authors names in the title accomplish a breakthrough in the Middle Ages, consisting in the freeing of thought from the Church's influence and shaping of an idea of a 'rational' tolerance which is universal and particular at the same time. By that they introduce a key problem of justification of tolerance which is still vital in the modern debate. Though we cannot prolong the tradition of natural theology, which was destroyed in the eighteenth century by Hume and Kant, we are still forced to manage

the conflicts between the universal and the particular. While the medieval dialogues are searching for an universal point of view (*ratio*), but still remain particular, the modern reasoning attempts to start its argument by introducing a universal and pure formal premise at the very beginning. For example the premise that everyone has a 'right of justification' ("Recht auf Rechtfertigung"). According to the German philosopher Rainer Forst this should be the universal, mutual and rational grounding of tolerance. In cases of injustice everyone can appeal to this right, and force the society or the state to a justified explanation. But this premise isn't as universal as it attempts to be, it could easily become itself a particular point of view, if the idea of justification ignores its limits. Instead there might be a wisdom of suspending justification in religious and ideological discourse if we can't reach an universal and mutual agreement, but are facing on the contrary the "irrational" decisions and opinions of "the other". Current tolerance needs the wisdom, which we are finding in the medieval dialogues, as well.

A *caesura* is formed by three articles in the second section, which are not so much based on the presentation of tolerance with regards to particular authors, but rather present the problem itself in the context of international communication. Oliver Leopold Bach takes up this question, stating the question right away in the title: *Ist Toleranz lehrbar? Vom Umgang mit kulturellen Differenzen im Diskurs der Interkulturellen Kommunikation* ("O obchodzeniu się z kulturowymi różnicami w dyskursie międzykulturowej komunikacji"). The author begins his analysis with a presentation of intercultural communication. He attempts to present the problem of the range of intercultural communication on the basis of the definition of culture, as well as on the possibility of ethnocentrism. The picture also includes the issue of stereotypes and cultural differences. Modern tendencies towards globalization in economics and politics necessitate the raising of the question of the problem of culture with relation to global culture. The cultures which compose united Europe are so different that searching for unity is very difficult, and perhaps even impossible. The question of whether it is possible to teach tolerance is taken up in relation to

previous representatives of the Enlightenment and their tendency towards raising the young in respect to other cultures and individuals.

Alongside the problem of culture and teaching tolerance appears the delicate topic of discussing the Center Against the Expelled, the seed of the conflict between Germany and Poland. Tobias Held takes this issue up in *Das Zentrum gegen Vertreibungen in der aktuellen Diskussion* ("Centrum przeciwko Wypędzeniom w obecnej dyskusji"). The author's purpose is not to give an answer to the question if the Center should be opened, but rather to present and assess the public debate concerning this issue. As this problem has for some time been a germ of disagreement between Poland and Germany, it is above all necessary to understand the motivations and forces driving both sides. The Center's purpose is the creation of an information platform to be used as a political tool, as well as to do away with the post-war classifications of victims and perpetrators built on collective guilt. In doing so it is vital to take into consideration individual experiences and the yearnings of those forcefully resettled. Poles fear that the opening of the Center will lead to regarding Germans as victims of the war. The debate is not helped by the extreme positions of representatives and founders of the Center. The author highlights that the German side also includes politicians and people from the cultural sphere who are as fearful of the founding of the Federation of Expellees as Poles are. This Federation may demand reparations for losses resulting from resettlement from such countries as Poland. Another potential threat is the inclination towards the creation of a national victimization myth. A point of contention is also the location of the museum, as the German side demands its founding in Berlin, whereas the Polish side wants it in Wrocław. The debate, which has spawned many controversies on both sides, is destroying the symbiosis between Poles and Germans. It is necessary to underline that this text was presented in March 2006 and this perspective seems very important in assessing the entire situation. In spite of the passage of time, the article has lost little of its relevance.

The last article presented in the set is *Tolerance as a Constitutional Value in Polish Constitution from 2 April 1997* ("Tolerancja jako wartość konstytucyjna w ustawie zasadniczej Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 2 kwietnia 1997 roku"), authored by Michał Pawełkowski. The problem as taken up in some parts relates to earlier tendencies in Polish culture observed in Modrzewski's works and during the Enlightenment. The Constitution is the expression of the people's will, but also that of cultural values. The author presents the idea of tolerance as a particular value. The law-governed state possesses fundamental values, expressing axiological views which are accepted by society. The law does not so much look after those values as it does, above all, guard the free and rational individual. Tolerance does not find itself expressed explicitly in the Constitution, but rather through sections concerning freedom. The author concerns himself with presenting the relationship between the current Constitution of the Third Republic and such values as tolerance and freedom.

This volume has as its goal the presentation of the question of tolerance as it relates specifically to individuals and their points of view. Today this concept seems quite general and idealistic, however, it possesses a very real dimension. It rests on the experience of the individual and his values. The social dimension is grounded in ethics, which has its foundation in openness and dialog. Tolerance is at present considered a subject far removed from manifestations of religion, but it would seem that this concept should give way to another understanding which takes into consideration those first contributions to tolerance coming from the religious experience. European ethics and religions gave the impetus to the rise of the idea of tolerance. The experience of totalitarianism, as well as earlier feelings of alienation of the individual, resulted in tolerance – owing to the suffering and death of millions – becoming something real and necessary in the surrounding reality. Today tolerance proceeds away from conviction of the worth of the individual in spite of the experience of evil and harm. It is becoming a necessity which is not only a foundation, but also demands deepening through openness and

dialog between people. It would seem that tolerance is only a term which must begin to function as interpersonal solidarity; this solidarity grows out of both people's suffering and people's hope. To give force to the idea of tolerance it is crucial to cast aside the claim that the individual, falling into untruth, cannot get out of it and accept that the individual, experiencing suffering at the hands of demons is not a demon himself. Stratification and prejudice towards various minorities and other viewpoints leads to their elimination from social life, which creates a demonic image of the individual. Eliminating tension may be possible through the mutual co-existence of different groups. Tolerance does not threaten identity, as identity is a value assumed by tolerance. The coming together of cultures, religions and various ethnic groups is possible if we accept as the proper attitude one of dialogues and openness in mutual co-existence.

Translated by Matthew La Fontaine